

standard then; and when the day of Egypt's prosperity declined, it was night till the dawn arose on Greece. The history of architecture, then, after the fall of Egypt, is simply that it died and was not, till the cycle of the world's energies animated it again in a new form and among a new people, after many centuries, during which the mind of man was beneath the standard of its possession; and, indeed, here we have something really worth boasting of in our "History in Stone" over all other histories,—that it marks man's progress and condition in difficult periods with an exactitude which fighting and other such more approved exponents of history do not by any means so well possess. In the ruins on the banks of the Nile,—in the temples on the crown of the Acropolis,—in the remains of imperial Rome,—he who can read this history finds illustration of the phases of humanity worth volumes of learned and laborious inquiry. The calm untutored ponderous first,—the severely natural and beautiful second,—the last richly luxuriant but in richness gradually effeminated, express in everlasting record simply and at once, more than frequently laborious treatises can shew of the unformed massive Egyptian, the philosophic Greek, and the mighty but degenerating Roman, whose works and memorials they are.

The monuments of the Egyptian and Indian building have never yet, by fashion, been rendered so familiar to the systematizer, with dates and histories, as to admit of our tracing well the rise, climax, and decline of those species of architectural works; but in the classic school, from the first simple temple of infant Attica to the mongrel fancies of expiring Rome, and even to its absolute fading away into alienation in the basilica of the Christians, we can trace minutely, and step by step, the course from the cradle to the tomb, and, with the changes, and declining, and reviving health of the world, the no less fitful changes, and declining, and reviving health of the art.

How much we may be influenced by the prejudice of education is perhaps in some measure a question,—but certainly we think the temple of the Greeks, born seemingly, like its own goddess, in full maturity, is a most remarkable production of the human mind. In the system of the middle ages, for example, there is no parallel in any way to so striking a fact. Every form and arrangement and principle seems traceable back into the very depth of rudeness. And so, perhaps, in no subject whatever among the productions of human genius is it otherwise. But in the ruins of Greece there appears absolutely no room at all for a search for the growth of architecture,—the Doric temple, complete and unimprovable, arises at one step. And if we were to say that the preparatory steps are all swept away, such a hypothesis would be as singular to the full as the other incomprehensible alternative—that preparatory steps there were none. In what we might expect as the natural course of cause and effect, we should be able to trace the relics of many efforts of increasing approach and the perfected standard as the end; and this, if not in the country of the standard itself, in some progenitor. If the first attempt upon the idea of the Greek temple were rude stones set up on end, and rude stones spanning over them, between this and the temple at Corinth there cannot but have been numerous gradations of advancement. And if we suppose that of these no vestiges whatever are in being, it is assuredly a supposition eminently unsupported by analogies; and if we therefore suppose that the vestiges have simply never attracted the keen edge of the antiquary's spade, that no less is a supposition which, from what we have been led to believe, is a very unlikely thing. If again it were argued that those earliest temples may be only the first works in stone of a style and pattern already perfected and established in a more perishable material,—not the old-fashioned dogma of the primitive hut, but a hypothesis that there were previous temples of the Greeks in a sort of simple carpentry,—then some may see another and not less important difficulty in the question, whether masonry of such good finish could have been attained to without preliminary steps, of which no remains exist. Indeed, it would appear as if the course were simply this, that perfect masonry and exquisite design sprang into being together and at once, or

that in both the preliminary steps of growth were no more than the tentatives of a short period.

In these days, when everything boasts a reason and a cause, and miraculous interpositions and credulous Villalpandas are more rare than they used to be, we will all take refuge in the conclusion that doubtless the matter in hand was all in the regular natural course, and has all its reasons, and good ones too, recorded in the invisible book of forgotten history. But it is no less remarkable and honourable to the Greek genius, that the fundamental conception—indeed, the detailed idea—of the earliest temples was never improved upon. There were amendments made in proportion and profile, and there were varieties of order introduced, but no organized change was ever attempted—such as in all other styles of art have stamped the earlier works as out of date, and of false conception. Simply, perhaps, because in no other school of design can it be at all said, with the force with which it can be said of this, that there was no falsity of conception at all. Possibly, as we have admitted, education may be to some extent blinding our vision, but we can scarcely detect the risk,—and if our study of the Greek temple proclaims it perfect and unimprovable in its conception, we have certainly this fact as a powerful support of the presumptuous position—that no other conception of design in the whole story of building is to be produced, in which the passion of improvement could detect no crudity whereon to fasten an organic change.

One word must be said on what we have in some degree admitted to be possible—the derivation of the Greek temple from wood construction, for it is manifest that the risk in such a case would be great of false conception, by reason of the different principles of the different materials. We have good reason to entertain a horror of this very danger of adaptation. But if it did prevail, it is only the more to the honour of the Greek genius that it passed so harmlessly, even with all allowance being made for the fact, that probably the principles of early carpentry and masonry would be by no means so widely different as the principles of the more advanced sciences of our day. If a first effort upon the principles of stone, the Greek temple is a marvellous work, and if an effort upon the basis of previous works in another material, it is no less marvellous in its perfection.

In the Ionic and Corinthian orders of the Greeks, the excellent principles of the original Doric were merely amplified and worked out in variety. The Ionic order, however, displays, in our view, with a certain increase of elegance, a decided lapse in perfectness, while the monument of Lysicrates, as the only Greek work in Corinthian, is merely to be taken as a solitary gem which, with the exquisite Caryatic portico in the Erechtheum, only shows us how much the genius of the day was capable of producing in happy novelty. The Romans, in engrafting more luxuriance on the principles of the Greeks, carried out the system in many admirable varieties, but in process of time more variously than well; and at length the result was the insinuation of false principles and feebleness, which ended in a ruin of the spirit of the Greeks more complete than the early masters of the style could have comprehended to be possible.

The introduction of the principle of the arch was what might have been an important era in the history of design under the Romans: but it was the fate of this principle to be misapplied by them from the first. It ought at once to have originated (as it afterwards did), a new style of design. The principles of arcuated building are as essentially different from those of the Greek or trabeated style as opposite materials could be; but the architects of the time were somehow so infatuated in a spirit of mere regulation, uninventive and unreferred to first principles, following merely superficial form in neglect of animating spirit, that their use of the arch was only as a graft upon a system of forms founded on opposite principles, and therefore quite incompatible with an amalgamation such as they attempted. Misapplication and discordance were only the natural results; and long before the decline of wealth and influence prompted the spoil of the old monuments for materials wherewith to build the new, the decline of artistic truth had

destroyed the merit of their work, by prompting an indiscriminating reference to the old forms to supply the lack of the originating powers of genius.

With the Romans also the application of architectural design—the province of building—became immensely enlarged; and it was again their fault that novelty of circumstances and requirements failed in the production of novelty of design. They did not proceed upon first principles in designing, nor in copying and adapting refer to them. The powers which produced the monument of Lysicrates and the Caryatic portico had now scope for an infinity of excellent modification and variety, but the genius was gone from the world.

Meantime, the barbarian hunters and shepherds of the north were multiplying their numbers and, swelling within their bounds, and looking out of their miserable huts across the Roman boundaries upon palaces and rich fields,—began to meditate attack and plunder; while the enervated Romans only excited their evil passions by the exhibition of degeneracy and vice. In a few years these savage hordes were to be masters of the empire of the world, defenders of the Christian faith, and founders of a new period in our story of building. But let us pause at the fall of a mighty people; and, while we blame deficiencies, acknowledge with reverence a still wondrous supremacy, and a legacy left to us of more virtue and wisdom than will ever permit the tongue of levity to dishonour the Roman name. K.

LEICESTER-SQUARE AND ONE OF OUR FRIENDS.

We have what "James" would call an "emusing" correspondent. We have several "emusing" correspondents; but one who is more particularly so than the others. This gentleman—we suppose he is a gentleman, and one apparently with much spare time on his hands—makes it his recreation to write us with constancy and regularity (let us give him the credit of such virtues as he really has), to reproach us with not having mentioned something which nine times out of ten has not occurred. He was surprised that we did not inform our readers, seeing that other papers had already informed theirs, that a new colonial office was to be built directly; astonished we had not mentioned that the works were wholly stopped at the new Houses of Parliament (this was before any of the men had been discharged); and really quite indignant when he found that we did not state, as others did, that Mr. Barry had received orders to improve the National Gallery,—at the very moment when we held in our hands (exclusively, we may take this opportunity of remarking, notwithstanding its appearance elsewhere without acknowledgment), the report of the Parliamentary committee advising that the same, when done, should be opened to competition.

Our foolish friend seems to consider it his mission to point out to us what we have not done, and as we are mortal, and, moreover, do not pretend to speak of everything which legitimately falls within our province, he will find it a prolific field for labour, even if he had the wit to confine himself to matters which might with propriety be treated of, and to avoid blaming us for not having assisted to spread false reports.

In his last communication, which, like the preceding, shews that he cannot thus discriminate, he gravely points out the omission by us of any account of "the proposed novel bazaar in Leicester-square." "Haven't you seen," says he, "long ago in the other papers, that the erection now in the course of being made is to be no other than a fancy bazaar, which is to be built partly upon the same plan as the 'Lowther' in the Strand, and that the ground-plan adopted for the undertaking is as follows: passages of about 25 feet in width are to be made from each corner of the square, and are to terminate in a circle in close proximity to the statue. Upon either side of these passages, tiny shops are to be fitted up, in so tasteful a manner as will insure their being speedily let to parties who will fit them up as depositories for the sale of fancy goods of every description. Moreover, it was expected that it would be open for the sale of fancy articles